You Speak for You; I’ll Speak for Me; Let God Speak for God

Romans 14:1-6

Introduction:

1. It is amazing and interesting how often people try to read others’ minds and to reveal the thoughts of God without permission from either.
   1. “I think I can speak for everyone here.”
   2. “What I say represents what most Christians think.”
   3. “I know it doesn’t say that exactly, but I don’t think God is pleased with such actions.”
2. A good principle, taught in Romans 14 is: you speak for you; I’ll speak for me, let God speak for God.
3. What is being discussed in this chapter are not matters of clear sin, but rather things of choice.
   1. Some things are clearly wrong. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10
   2. Some things are right within themselves but wrong if one’s conscience is trained against them.
      1. Attending a Walt Disney cartoon, such as Snow White.
      2. Playing pool in a Christian home.
      3. Fishing, playing ball, or mowing the yard on Sunday afternoon.
      4. Playing cards as a form of entertainment.
4. The weakness of belief is not in relation to Christ.
   1. The weakness is in the lack of ability to distinguish between right and wrong.
   2. This is a growth process. Hebrews 5:12-14
      1. Some would approve what is wrong.
      2. Others would forbid what is right.
5. THERE ARE CHOICES IN EMPHASIS. Romans 14:5, 6
   1. There were probably Jews who still thought of some days as having special religious significance.
      1. They could regard those days to the Lord.
      2. They should not bind them upon others.
      3. Others should not forbid this emphasis on their part.
   2. Because of background or choice, there may be members of the church today who place emphasis on certain days.
      1. The days.
         1. Remembering Jesus’ birthday on December 25.
         2. Emphasizing the resurrection on Easter.
         3. Mother’s Day.
         4. Father’s Day.
         5. 4th of July.
         6. Labor Day.
         7. No work or recreation on Sunday.
      2. Our response.
         1. They can regard a special day to the Lord if they do not violate any Bible principles. Romans 14:5, 6
         2. They should not bind that day or practice on others.
         3. Others who choose not to participate, should not ridicule their emphasis or restraints.
6. THERE IS LIBERTY IN EATING. Romans 14:2,3,14-18
   1. The truth is that God allows us to eat what we choose when we have the right attitude. 1 Timothy 4:1-5
   2. However, some will be convinced otherwise and should follow their conscience in this matter.
7. EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE FOR EDIFICATION. Romans 14:19-21
   1. My aim is to build up brethren. 1 Corinthians 10:23-33
   2. I should do nothing that would lead a brother to sin. 1 Corinthians 8:13
   3. The weak brother is one who can be persuaded to violate his conscience. 1 Corinthians 8:4-13
   4. I should do nothing that would convict my conscience because of doubt. Romans 14:23
   5. Romans 14:21 is not my authority to manipulate others – to get my way – by using the magic work, “offend.”
8. THERE SHOULD BE CARE AND CAUTION IN EVALUATION.
   1. Of others. Romans 14:4, 10-13
      1. I can and should hold brethren accountable and be held accountable – even to withholding fellowship from brethren who rebelliously participate in clear sin. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
      2. I may be asked and am authorized to help in settling disputes between brethren. 1 Corinthians 6:1-7
      3. I am to decide matters of opinion for myself and let others make their judgments I those matters. Romans 14:5
      4. I am to surrender to Jesus for the court of eternal judgment – both for myself and others; I have not been authorized to keep a heaven and hell list, a summary of eternal judgment.
         1. It is not the time and I don’t have adequate information. 1 Corinthians 4:1-5
         2. I don’t have the books. Revelation 20:11-15
         3. I don’t have the authority. John 5:22
      5. But what about judging righteous judgment?
         1. This had to do with criticizing Jesus’ healing of a man on the Sabbath and their wondering how Jesus had His knowledge without a formal education. John 7:14-24
            1. They circumcised a man on the Sabbath day.
            2. Jesus had put a man together, made whole, a man on the Sabbath day.
         2. The judgment committed to the Son exclusively was eternal judgment. John 5:22-29
   2. Of ourselves. Romans 14:14, 22, 23
      1. It is a blessing to have a well-informed conscience.
      2. It is a blessing to have a tender conscience.
      3. It is better to have a sore conscience than none.

Conclusion:

1. The lesson of tolerance is important.
   1. When I feel uncomfortable about a practice for which there is no clear Bible teaching, I need to assume responsibility for that feeling and state it as such.
   2. When a brother attempts to speak for God when God has not spoken, I need to distinguish between what my brother feels and what God has said.
      1. Often people will say, “I don’t think God is pleased with . . .”
      2. What is more accurate is, “Because of my background, or because of my understanding of some biblical principles, I feel uncomfortable with what you are doing.”
      3. I can respond, either verbally or mentally, by, “I respect your scruples; however, I do not feel disconnected to God because God has not condemned what I am doing.” Colossians 2:16,17
         1. I will respond verbally if the brother is able to reason and handle disagreement.
         2. I will respond mentally if the brother cannot bear the conflict, but I refuse to feel guilty for doing what God allows. John 16:12
2. A man nearly drove his daughter away by speaking for God on the matter of pierced ears.
   1. His comments.
      1. “Good girls don’t pierce their ears.”
      2. “God doesn’t want his people being like the world.”
   2. Her reaction.
      1. Until she was eleven or twelve years old, she reluctantly accepted Daddy’s word as God’s word.
      2. Then she began to read the Bible to find the verse where God spoke on the issue that wearing ear screws was right but putting holes in the ears and wearing earrings was sinful.
   3. His truthful response.
      1. “In the community where I grew up in the 1940’s and 1950’s, only wicked girls pierced their ears.”
      2. “I still have an uncomfortable feeling when I see a woman with pierced ears.”
      3. “I know the Bible doesn’t make a distinction between earrings on pierced ears and earrings on ears without holes.”
      4. “The problem is with my feelings and not with what the Bible teaches.”
      5. “You have my permission to pierce your ears because I know that you are a good girl and that pierced ears are not sinful.”
      6. “I apologize for what I have said and will try to work through my feelings because the problem is mine and not yours.”
3. Paul was writing to Christians. Romans 14:7, 8
4. Those who belong to the Lord have the hope of heaven. 2 Corinthians 5:6-11